

Annual review

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The British Council for Offices' mission is to research, develop and communicate best practice in all aspects of the office sector.

It delivers this by providing a forum for the discussion and debate of relevant issues.

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Highlights of the year

Simon Ward, BCO President, 2005-06

As I look back at similar missives from recent Past Presidents, I am struck by the consistency of message:

- **Growing membership numbers**

– now fast approaching 1,200 and double the number of six years ago. The BCO's four Regional Chapters (Scotland, the North of England, the Midlands and the South West & Wales) also continue to make excellent progress, complementing the BCO's national offer by providing technical tours, seminars and other events of topical, local interest.

- **A strong research programme being at the heart of the BCO**

– reports this year have covered subjects as diverse as Sustainability and Planning, ICT and Offices and Design and Value. Later this year, we will publish major guides (to complement the BCO Specification and Guide to Office Fit-out) dealing with Environmental Management, Post-Occupancy Evaluation and Security.

- **Successful Annual Conference and flagship events programme**

– the Dublin Conference (brilliantly run by Ann Minogue), the President's Lunch (with speaker Sir Digby Jones), the Awards Dinner and finally the Annual Dinner (attended by over 1,700 members and their guests, a record for any BCO event), and

- **Excellent support from committee members and the Executive**

for which my heartfelt thanks.

This year has also seen the complete re-design of the BCO website and the restructuring of the Board to ensure that it more accurately reflects the diversity and breadth of the BCO's membership. At the ripe old age of sixteen then, the BCO clearly seems a well-established, well-run and successful institution!

In such circumstances, many are apt to quote the old adage of: 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', but I must say that I tend to come from the alternative school that feels that continuous improvement is the name of the game. That is why this year we have set up the Future of the BCO Working Party. The principal purpose of the Working Party is to consider how the BCO can most effectively build on its successes through, for example, further enhancement of our research programme. The Working Party's report and recommendations will be presented to the Board in the autumn and all members will, of course, be briefed in due course.

I can scarcely believe my year has come to an end already and I would like to thank all members for their support, interest and dedication to the BCO, and lastly friendship over the last 12 months.

Finally, I would like to wish the BCO every success going forward. I know that my successor, Ann Minogue, together with Gordon Carey, James Wates and Richard Kauntze all share a passion for the BCO and its continuing and successful evolution.

Best wishes.
Simon Ward

At the ripe old age of sixteen then, the BCO clearly seems a well-established, well-run and successful institution!



Research and Policy

We have taken a thematic approach to research and policy this year, focusing on Sustainability, Urban Regeneration and the Workplace.

With the publication of eight research reports, involvement in a number of significant policy consultations, and continuous commissioning in these three areas, 2005-06 has been another successful year for the department.

Breaking new ground this year, we published our first book on tall buildings through a profitable collaboration with RIBA Enterprises. We also assisted in the publication and sponsorship of a new guide to creating more accessible offices for disabled people.

Our collaboration with other property and non-property organisations has increased and has had a significant impact on our policy activities.

The following research has been published this year:

The Accessible Office: designing the inclusive workplace (JMU Access Partnership, sponsored by the BCO), July 2005

With an emphasis on inclusive design, this technical document covers all aspects of planning and design, from statutory requirements (including the Disability Discrimination Act, planning regulations and health & safety legislation) and building regulations, to best practice guidance on lighting, signage, reach and mobility data. This document is a significant step forward for disabled access, with the most up to date practical guidance supported by over 50 detailed diagrams and illustrations.

Written for managers, HR staff and employees, as well as architects, designers and planners, the Accessible Office is a comprehensive guide to the inclusive workplace. The BCO and the JMU Access Partnership recognised that with mounting legal requirements and new legislation coming into effect, a single, concise document was needed to allow organisations, businesses, and individuals to understand the requirements for disabled access. This new best practice guide fulfils this goal.

Research reports

Tall Buildings: A Strategic Design Guide (September 2005)

This is an authoritative guide to the key technical aspects to consider in generating, understanding and evaluating tall building proposals.

Written by a team of highly respected practitioners with detailed specialist knowledge, the book is aimed at clients, statutory authorities, architects and other agencies seeking to understand tall buildings from a strategic standpoint. It considers urban design, architecture, engineering, life safety, construction economics, market economics and building occupancy.

Illustrated throughout in full colour, the book's geographical context is primarily the UK, with a focus on London. It describes the features that distinguish a tall building in technical, functional, aesthetic and planning terms by using case studies such as the Heron, Columbus, London Bridge and Minerva Towers, 122 Leadenhall Street, Canary Wharf, Tower 42 and Centrepont. With attention to tall buildings gathering steam across the UK, Tall Buildings: A Strategic Design Guide is an invaluable tool for anyone hoping to fully understand these technically distinct and potentially beautiful structures.

It's the first time that the BCO has teamed up with RIBA to publish research in a book and we hope to do more in the future.

Flexible Managed Office Market - Stage 3 (November 2005)

This is the third stage of this study of the UK's flexible office market. This report presents the latest findings of a survey of flexible managed space operators. It covers current and future demand, changes in occupancy and availability in terms of costs of occupation, and changes in floor space and workstation stock.

Better Places to Work (January 2006)

This report examines the relationship between the UK planning system and the design and development of workspace, and asks how the planning system can influence the design and development of commercial space.

Based on a series of case studies, this report demonstrates that badly located and poorly designed work places can have a detrimental effect on employees and upon the wider environment. 'Better Places to Work' presents the case in favour of good planning for workplaces, offering guidance on all stages of the development process for all those involved.

This new report is a companion to the joint BCO Cabe workplace report 'The impact of office design on business performance', published in May 2005. It builds upon a previous report from CABA and the BCO which found that increased standards of design can have a significant positive effect on workplace productivity. It stated that people who work in well designed and well located workplaces naturally feel more valued as employees and, as a result, are more productive and less likely to be thinking of moving on. 'Better Places to Work' is the second joint report which the BCO has produced with Cabe in the past twelve months.

Planning and Sustainability Briefing Paper (February 2006)

This is a new style briefing paper focusing on Planning and Sustainability. Written by a member of the BCO's Environmental Sustainability Group, it is designed to provide BCO members with a comprehensive guide on the evolution of the term "sustainability" within the planning system, with a particular emphasis on office development.

This paper examines the legislation and initiatives issued at a UK, European and international level. It highlights the pressures facing developers when proposing office development in the UK, and keeps BCO members abreast of the latest policy developments and how they will be interpreted in the planning system. It is specifically designed to provide background and practical information which members can use in their daily practice.

ICT and Offices: practiced realities and their business benefits (March 2006)

This new report explores the way in which information and communication technologies (ICT) have been used by leading firms to change the way people and organisations work; the impact this has had on the office workplace, and the likely impact in the future. The report sets out the evolution of ICT to the present day and presents a vision of the workplace in 2010.

It also examines the barriers to ICT and the strategies that have been used to overcome them. It features case studies from Marks and Spencer, Barclays Global Investors, and Prudential and demonstrates how ICT provides business benefits.

Offices, Value and Design (May 2006)

Good design and its impact on office development and office values has become a major subject for research and debate. This report is the third in a series of research work which Cabe and the British Council for Offices jointly commissioned. The two other companion reports focused on the impact of design on workplace productivity and how design could create better places to work. This report was intended to contribute to the discussion on the value of design and has been produced here as a discussion paper.

The Impact of Office Design on Business Performance – FULL REPORT – (June 2006)

This is the in-depth research report produced as a companion to the summary report released in the summer of 2005. Examining the connection between office design and business performance the aim in this study was been to identify those design factors that might make office environments more productive, serving the strategic purposes of the business. In presenting this considerable analysis to its members this exercise should enable those interested in this area to use this hefty piece of research as a positive route map for addressing their business's future accommodation needs.

Workplace Productivity: Designs, Locations, and People – (July 2006)

Using the recommendations of the BCO-Cabe report on "The Impact of Office Design on Business Efficiency," this study examines the impact of moving offices on several different UK businesses. These occupiers varied in their size, nature and type of business, and each have moved to new or refurbished offices in the last few years. Assessing the reasons for these moves, the role of all those involved, the process and outcome, this case study heavy report provides a practical analysis of business relocations and their impact on commercial performance.



Continuing Projects

Management Guidance on Security

Will seek to make the business case for security planning; clarify fundamental considerations at key stages; consolidate information sources, provide signposts and checklists; and indicate principles of good practice.

Tenant Handover

A new tool advising occupiers on the different aspects and demands of the building handover process.

Customer & Supplier Alignment in Office Occupancy

A major collaborative project undertaken by Business Vantage which examines customer and supplier alignment in the occupancy supply chain. This includes the provision of buildings by owners, the advisory services of surveyors, lawyers, designers and so on, and workspace and facilities service provision.

BCO Guide to Environmental Management

This new guide will investigate how the requirements of environmental management from construction, through life and the end of the office, can inform design. This guide is not intended to cover all issues in great depth, but to provide a route map for users. It will highlight the issues that need to be addressed and guidance on sources of information and processes and what can be learned from casestudies.

Work life Balance and Offices

Work-life balance is a hot topic and this research project explores various work-life balance issues and combines case studies with policy development in this field.

New Commissions

BCO Guide to Post Occupancy Evaluation

This guide is intended to raise awareness of the benefits of Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) and provide BCO members with practical advice on how they can start their own POE studies. POE helps the construction industry build better workplaces by getting feedback on the success and failures of building projects, and sharing that feedback amongst construction professionals and occupiers.

Awards Benchmarking study

An examination of all the data and materials submitted to the BCO by entrants to the BCO Awards over the past few years. This benchmarking exercise should reveal current design and occupancy trends and different aspects of design innovation.

Part L Briefing Document

The second in a new series of briefing documents, this will provide members with guidance on Part L of the Building Regulations 2006.

Policy

The BCO's policy activity has continued to grow. Our involvement and representation on various government and non-government policy groups has been matched by our participation in many different consultative exercises across the UK's devolved government structure.

Service Charges in Commercial Property RICS Code of Practice

This year the BCO worked alongside the RICS and other property bodies to produce this new code of practice. This Code represents the most desirable structure for service charges, which the steering group (on which the BCO served) recommend be appropriately implemented in all new leases. This Code will come into effect on 1 April 2007.

Disabled Person Transport Advisory Committee

Built Environment Working Group

This group advises on improving access to the built environment for disabled people. It acts as a valuable two-way communication channel and BCO has continued to play an active role.

London Business Improvement Districts Advisory Board

Created to encourage the development of BIDS across the Capital, our place on this Board will enable us to represent London's office sector in the decision making processes which will take place concerning BIDS over the next few years.

The National Ratepayers Valuation Forum

This forum encourages ratepayers to take part in the Valuation Office Agency's discussions about future reform of the national rating system. Through our membership, the BCO is able to act on behalf of our members and ensure that their views are heard.

Directive Implementation Advisory Group (DIAG)

The BCO sits on this Group, which advises Government on the timely and effective implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

Commercial Leases Working Party

The BCO is a member of this property industry working party. This group is reviewing the current code of practice for commercial leases in England and Wales with the aim of issuing a new code.

Ministerial Property Consultation Group

The BCO is a member of this government advisory group, which meets every year. This body enables us to present the views of our members directly to the government minister with responsibility for property issues.

Policy Consultations

The BCO has represented members' interests on a number of policy consultation exercises during the past twelve months.

Revisions to the Principles of
Selection for Listing Buildings
August 2005

Lease Code Review
January 2006

Inclusive Design Principles
October 2005

Beneficial ownership of land and property:
the VAT Act 1994
February/March 2006

Options to Tax
March/April 2006

Planning Gain Supplement
February 2006

Place Consultation Tool
May 2006

Code of Practice for Commercial Leases
March to July 2006

Service Charges in Commercial Property
June 2006



Committees

Over the course of 2005-06 BCO members again supported the organisation's events, regional activities and research and policy efforts by participating in the BCO's committees and working parties.

Permanent Standing Committees

TECHNICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chaired by Richard Terry of Arup

Achievements

- Assisted in the creation of a new Part L briefing document
- Dealt with best practice enquiries and developments
- Held consultations with the BCO Occupiers' Group about the future development of the BCO's workplace programme

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chaired by Bill Black of Capital and Counties

Achievements

- Increase in the BCO's membership to 1,200
- New initiative to engage with the educational sector
- Assessment of the value of the BCO's membership

URBAN COMMITTEE

Chaired by David Ainsworth of City Offices.

Achievements

- Organised a workshop on the Public Realm at the Annual Conference in Dublin 2006
- Established a strategic relationship with the LSE Cities Programme

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Chaired by Mike Beaven of Arup

Achievements

- Developed an entire workshop stream for the Annual Conference in Dublin 2006
- Published the Planning and Sustainability Briefing Paper in February 2006
- Assisted in the holding of the Sustainable Offices – Becoming Reality workshop in April 2006
- Project steering group for BCO Guide to Environmental Management
- Reviewed BCO research stand on energy

Ad Hoc Committees

OCCUPIERS' GROUP

Chaired by Paul Harrington of PWC

Achievements

- Assisted in the planning and organisation of the Occupier Stream at the Annual Conference in Dublin 2006
- Project steering group for BCO Guide to Post Occupancy Evaluation
- Project steering group for the BCO Handover Tool
- Participated in the development of new collaborative research on tenant satisfaction
- Developed a new series of occupier based events for the BCO's occupier community

Whilst the BCO committees have been successful in involving members, developing research and hosting events both regional and national, a strategic review of their structure and purpose began in June 2006. The results of this review will be implemented in 2006-07.





Events and activities

Providing a Forum for BCO members

This year has seen many events held around the UK, providing an opportunity for members to share ideas and debate industry issues. Technical tours to inspirational buildings are a firm staple of the BCO calendar, along with our high profile Awards Dinner, Annual Dinner and President's Luncheon. We hope you enjoyed the events you were able to attend.

Northern Dinner 05 – Leeds

14-July-05

This dinner for 415 guests was sold out and celebrated Northern Chapter entrants for the BCO Awards. Those short-listed for awards were announced and presented with certificates by Debra Stephenson of Coronation Street and Bad Girls fame.

AGM

21-Jul-05

Despite difficulties on the day due to the attempted second London bombings, sufficient members were able to attend and the legal procedures were able to take place, and our thanks to them all.

BCO Golf Day

13-Sep-05

40 members and their guests took part in the Annual Golf Day at Royal Mid Surry Golf Club, organised by Tim Mote of ISG InteriorExterior.

Scottish Chapter Study Tour

15-16 Sep-05

13 members joined the Scottish Chapter on a tour of some of London's best-known office buildings on this two day visit to the capital organised by Stephen Aird of AEGON.



Events and activities

President's Lunch 05

21-Sep-05

Sir Digby Jones was the guest speaker at this popular annual event held at the Savoy to launch the BCO Presidential year.

Tall Buildings Launch Party

28-Sep-05

150 guests joined the BCO and RIBA to launch research from the Tall Buildings Group – 'Tall Buildings: A Strategic Design Guide'. We held the event at Moorhouse by kind permission of Hammerson.

FT Conference

28-29 Sep-05

This BCO supported event explored what the future holds for the property industry.

Awards Dinner 05

4-Oct-05

1500 members and their guests enjoyed this celebratory, sell-out evening hosted by popular comedian Clive Anderson.

Building Design Exhibition

5-Oct-05

This event provided a forum for senior construction, FM and property professionals. Mike Beaven of ARUP, represented the BCO at the associated conference.

Technical Tour - CIPD Tour

11-Oct-05

BCO member GMW architects organised an event involving the whole project team at this stunning office development for 30 members.

SW&W Annual Dinner 05

2-Nov-05

60 members and their guests attended the first South West & Wales Dinner. The event was a great success and it will become an annual event.

Technical Tour - BBC Scotland

2-Dec-05

28 BCO members were given a glimpse behind the scenes at BBC Scotland's HQ at Pacific Quay in Glasgow. The BBC provided an insight into its business drivers, followed by a site tour hosted by Land Securities, Bovis Lend Lease and the BBC.

Talking Tall Conference

7-Dec-05

Talking Tall was a one-day event on the planning, design, development, management and construction of Tall Buildings which was supported by the BCO and other industry bodies.



Events and activities

Technical Tour & Seminar - Experian

17-Jan-06

The Midlands Chapter gave 35 BCO members the opportunity to visit Experian's offices at NG2 in Nottingham where members of the project team discussed their experiences. Andrew Mawson presented a preview of the BCO's latest ICT research.

Annual Dinner 06

24-Jan-06

1691 members and their guests – a record number - joined the BCO at the Annual Dinner where Michael Portillo was our guest speaker.

Technical Tour - Discovery Networks Europe

26-Jan-06

15 delegates visited Discovery Networks Europe which moved from a number of central London locations to a single building in Chiswick Park.

Technical Tour - BBC White City

23-Feb-06

30 delegates visited one of the BCO's 2005 Award Winners.

Roundtable in Scotland

4-Mar-06

Roundtable with Property Week and the Scottish Chapter of the British Council for Offices. It was held in the offices of Tods Murray Edinburgh and chaired by Scottish BCO chairman Bill Ferrie.

The roundtable tied in with Property Week's Scottish Supplement and focused on the state of the commercial property industry in Scotland. It examined the mood of financial sector occupiers in Scotland, the impact that the new Scottish planning bill might have on the market, whether much attention is being paid to the "green buildings agenda", whether tall buildings will ever become a reality in Scotland and what impact mixed-use development is having on the Scottish market.

Shaping Tomorrow's Workplace + ICT Launch

22-Mar-06

- What does tomorrow's workplace look like?
- What do you need to do now to your organisation to the future?
- What is the truth about workplace technologies like wireless, RFID and IP telephony and what part can they play?
- What behavioural barriers are companies finding and how have they overcome them?
- What are the best triggers for change and how can you use these?

The answers to these questions were revealed through a series of case studies from leading organisations who have started their journey to the future. This one-day conference was based on BCO, King Sturge and Orange research – ICT and Offices, practiced realities and their business benefits. The conference was followed by an evening launch of the research.

Technical Tour - The Johnson Building, London

28-Mar-06

40 members visited this important 1930s structure that has been reworked and substantially expanded to bring 148,300 sq. ft of flexible, high specification office accommodation to the Midtown market.

Technical Tour - RBS World HQ, Gogarburn

30-Mar-06

The Royal Bank of Scotland's new global HQ in Edinburgh was hailed as "a world class working environment" by Scottish Secretary Alistair Darling. 22 members visited the building in an event organised by the Scottish Chapter.

Sustainable Offices - Becoming Reality

27-Apr-06

Delegates took part in a seminar discussing the BCO's Planning and Sustainability briefing paper and Birmingham City Council's consultation paper for the city - this assesses how sustainable practices should be applied to future office development in Birmingham.

1691 members and their guests –
a record number – Annual Dinner 06





Events and activities

Annual Conference – Dublin 06

11-12 May-06

This year's Annual Conference in Dublin, led by Ann Minogue, was a sell out, with 750 delegates attending.

Technical Tour - Cardiff Debating Chamber

18-May-06

30 delegates were invited to visit Lord Richard Roger's £67m design which was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 1st March and has already become a landmark building in the heart of Cardiff Bay.

Technical Tour - The Davidson Building

24-May-06

Members attended this tour of one of Derwent Valley's innovative office designs. The tour was sponsored by Buro Four.

Technical Tour - Quatermile Tour

7-Jun-06

A quarter mile from Edinburgh Castle, a quarter mile from the Royal Mile and a quarter mile from corner to corner, a vibrant new district is growing within the Scottish capital's World Heritage site. Delegates were delighted to have the opportunity to visit this exciting project.

Technical Tour - GOGGS EAST

14-Jun-06

Refurbishing any building presents challenges, but when it is a listed building occupied by key government departments and situated in the heart of Westminster, those challenges take on a new dimension. Delegates were invited to visit this 2005 BCO Regional Award Winner for Recycled/Refurbished workplace.

Office Design - a risk too far?

29-Jun-06

As the UK Government Energy Review draws to a close, we ask: Is it arrogant to assert mankind can influence the planet's eco systems; or is it too late to stop catastrophe? Even if the UK's existing nuclear capacity was doubled, it would only give an 8% cut on CO2 emissions by 2035. Delegates discussed the issues at the Arup Campus.



Annual Conference

Dublin : Ann Minogue BCO Conference Chairman, 2006

Dublin in May in brilliant Spring sunshine proved an irresistible venue for this year's Conference. With the usual stage set of the Cliffs of Moher and resident leprechauns camouflaged for the Event, the Burlington Hotel's Conference facilities provided the venue for a capacity audience of some 750.



The plenary sessions focused on the booming local market and the transformation of Dublin itself as the Celtic Tiger continues to roar. We were very privileged that John Fitzgerald – the Dublin City Manager – took time out to outline his plans for Dublin's future development, whilst Frank MacDonald – Environmental Editor of The Irish Times – demanded a sustainable approach to renewal. In another plenary focusing on where the money comes from, we were told by the expert line up of Pat Gunne (CBRE), Aidan O'Hogan (Hamilton Osborne King), Stephen O'Riordan (A&L Goodbody) and Pat O'Sullivan (Bank of Ireland) that we ain't seen nothing yet graphically illustrated by an iceberg metaphor. And we heard about the economic backdrop to all of this from Ruairi Quinn TD Finance Minister during a key period in Ireland's renewal and asked Geoff Mulgan, (The Young Foundation), Wilf Stevenson (Smith Institute), Vicky Pryce (DTI) and Dermot Finch (IPPR) whether the conditions could usefully be replicated here. It is fair to say that the answer was generally 'no'!

Eddie O'Sullivan – Irish Rugby Coach – explained how management techniques such as KPIs and team working are just as relevant to rugby teams as they are to business, richly illustrated by video segments of England's defeats at Irish hands.

Because of feedback demands for more workshops, we had a record number of sessions, with approximately 100 speakers. This would have been impossible to organise without the unstinting work of Richard Beastall from Bennett Interior Design, Mike Beavan from Arup, Mick Mannion from M3 Consulting and my partner David Watkins. The range and depth of the debates richly demonstrates the complex web of issues facing the office market in the 21st Century and the sessions themselves provide much thought provoking material for future BCO research. Heartfelt thanks to all of the speakers for the exceptional range and breadth of their contributions made often under severe duress from committee members.



And the various tours of Dublin in the sunshine reminded us all of the City's enduring appeal.

And what better way of closing the Conference than comprehensively to insult all of the delegates, a task which Dara O'Brien undertook with aplomb (and certainly provided Richard Beastall with an evening to remember).

Looking forward to next year in New York.

Ann Minogue
Conference Chairman 2006



Defining excellence - BCO Awards



President's Awards

Lord Foster of Thamesbank

From the IBM Pilot Office building in Cosham, a study on lightness and flexibility; to the Willis Faber offices in Ipswich, organic in form, democratic in approach and with an openness that provides the opportunities for interaction that is still displayed in the best of office design (and all of which makes it hard to believe, on visiting that building, that it was completed 30 years ago); to the HSBC headquarters building in Hong Kong, a "cathedral to commerce" with its powerfully expressed structure, its organisation of service and circulation space, and its handling of the engagement between public and private realm; to the Commerzbank in Frankfurt, re-writing the rules for tall buildings and energy efficiency; and to the Swiss Re tower at 30 St Mary Axe, pulling off the trick of building big and tall in the City of London to almost universal acclaim; the story rolls on. And the ideas roll forward, not just through these landmarks but through a series of elegant buildings for some of our best known property companies, with each design displaying a consistency of principle whilst varying to suit differences of customer need, local climate, civic and social context and the unbounded imagination of the Architect.

This constant exploration of ways of progressing the art and science of office design on a solid base of past experience is what the BCO is about, and makes Norman Foster the worthy winner of the Presidents' Award for 2005.

Best of the Best

BBC Mailbox, Birmingham

The Mailbox base space was far from normal and the BBC made a courageous stand to go to this mixed-use wonder. The success of BDP as Architect and Engineers and iDEA as Space Planning and FFE Consultant can be measured against the challenge they faced from Mailbox's mail sorting office ancestry. The standard of fitout is very high; all elements display imagination, but also great discipline. It could have been frightful: instead it is great. The building is full of dynamism and light. A sense of openness is created by vast internal spaces, carried outwards by cutting huge windows across the front of the shell. Extra space was conjured from thin air by floating mezzanine 'gondolas' within the hangar-like shell. Over a narrow band, they reduce ceilings below BCO standards but this has been overcome on the upper level with a clever 'wavy' ceiling making the most of space and hiding existing structure and environment-friendly chilled beams.

The office space has been made to work very hard, with dense tables for programme production rapidly re-deployed for each new team. The judges were impressed that staff numbers had been increased by 100 while the usable area had reduced from 255,000 sq ft at Pebble Mill to 95,000 sq ft. at Mailbox. Adding the mezzanines created the unusual ratio of 142% net to gross.

The whole project is a good sustainability story. Although green options were restricted by working within an existing shell, increased natural lighting, passive chilled beams and solar shading acknowledge the green agenda.

This is a bespoke and specialised product and, due to its nature, was not cheap, but that does not take away from the success of this scheme. The judges considered that the solution exemplifies the BBC's willingness to embrace the culture and dynamics to promote change, increase efficiency and to provide a stimulating workplace. With notable civic responsibility, the achievement of this environment within an existing building is remarkable. A most worthy Best of the Best.

Winners in 2005

National Awards

Corporate Workplace
InfoLab 21, Lancaster

Commercial Workplace

National Air Traffic Services Corporate & Technical Centre, Solent Business Park, Whitely

Refurbished/Recycled Workplace

Vanilla Factory, Liverpool

Fit-out of Workplace (large projects)

BBC Mailbox, Birmingham

Fit-out of Workplace (small projects)

Farleigh Court, Flax Bourton, Bristol

Regional Awards

South of England/South Wales

Commercial Workplace

National Air Traffic Services Corporate & Technical Centre, Solent Business Park, Whitely

Fit-out of Workplace (small projects)

Farleigh Court, Flax Bourton, Bristol

London

Corporate Workplace

BBC Media Village, White City

Commercial Workplace

Davidson Building

Refurbished/Recycled Workplace

Government Offices, Great George Street

Fit-out of Workplace (large projects)

Clifford Chance, 10 Upper Bank Street

Midlands & East Anglia

Corporate Workplace

South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

Commercial Workplace

The Core Building at Brindleyplace, Birmingham

Fit-out of Workplace (large projects)

BBC Mailbox, Birmingham

North of England, North Wales & NI

Corporate Workplace

InfoLab 21, Lancaster

Commercial Workplace

1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, Manchester

Refurbished/Recycled Workplace

Vanilla Factory, Liverpool

Fit-out of Workplace (large projects)

BBC Project Hull

Fit-out of Workplace (small projects)

No. 1 Dock Street, Leeds

Scotland

Commercial Workplace

Gyle Square, Edinburgh



Looking forward

The year ahead: Richard Kauntze, BCO Chief Executive

Simon Ward mentioned in his reflection on his Presidential year the establishment of a group to consider the BCO's future (appropriately named The Future of the BCO Working Party). The Working Party has a broad brief, but its fundamental task is one of looking forward – the title of my section of this Annual Review. I cannot, of course, pre-empt the conclusions of the Working Party, but early discussions give a clear sense of direction: very significant further enhancement of the research programme (so crucial to the overall BCO offer), a more international approach to our thinking and a reassessment of what our members would like to see from the Annual Conference, of which a little more below.

In May 2007 the BCO will, for the first time hold its Annual Conference outside the British Isles or mainland Europe. The decision to go to New York (if you have not yet got the dates in your diary, please note 2 – 4 May 2007) reflects the BCO's ambition to learn from wider markets and engage on a global stage. Widely recognised as being (along with London) one of the only two, genuine world cities, New York presents an irresistible combination of attractions for all of those with an interest in offices: a vast selection of historic buildings; an ambitious programme of new office and mixed-use developments, many designed by the world's leading architects; the challenges at ground zero; the reinvention of the urban village and, fundamentally, a leadership structure designed to allow the inhabitants of New York and the city's millions of visitors to live, work and travel in a safe and pleasant environment.

New York 2007 promises to be a stunning conference with an irresistible mix of leading UK and US speakers, technical tours and networking activities. An early – booking flyer will be circulated to all members in September 2006, with the full conference brochure being published later in the autumn. Demand for places will undoubtedly be high, and I do urge all members to book quickly for what will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of the property calendar in 2007.

While considerable work and attention is necessarily being focussed on New York 2007, much else will be on offer in the year ahead. The other flagship events in the BCO's calendar (the President's Lunch, the Awards and Annual Dinners) continue to be ever more popular, and my thanks to all BCO members for their support. Following a clear signal received from last year's membership survey, we have expanded the programme of technical tours, and will further enhance the programme, particularly at a regional level, in the coming year. While I mentioned above the ongoing assessment of our research programme, three very significant research outputs will be published in the coming year: BCO Guides on Environmental Management, Post-Occupancy

Evaluation and Security. With BCO Specification and the Fit-Out Guides, this will bring the suite up to five, and I have no doubt that the new guides will quickly earn the status so rightly achieved by Specification and Fit-Out Guides.

To conclude some words of thanks. First, to Simon Ward, our President during 2005 – 06, for his enthusiasm, energy and support. My sincere thanks to Ann Minogue, Simon's successor, who worked so hard in delivering the Annual Conference in Dublin in May 2006. My thanks also to Gordon Carey, who moves up to Senior Vice-President, and who will lead New York 2007, and to James Wates, who continues as the BCO's Honorary Treasurer.

My thanks also to my own team, Ian Selby, Zoë Uddgren, Gina Wade, Mandy Bainger and Jenny MacDonnell. Jenny joined us in June 2006 as our new Research and Policy Officer, succeeding Andrea Littlestone, who left to join the research department at Cushman & Wakefield. My thanks to Andrea for all she did for the BCO during her three years with us.

Richard Kauntze
BCO Chief Executive

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